

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mississippi

1101 Robert E. Lee Building
239 North Lamar Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201



(601) 359-1288
FAX (601) 359-6295
TDD (601) 359-6230

Edwin C. LeGrand III - Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information Contact: Ms. Wendy D. Bailey
Director of Public Relations
Mississippi Department of Mental Health
Phone: (601) 359-1288

DMH LAUNCHES STATEWIDE THINK AGAIN CAMPAIGN

September 28, 2009 (Jackson, MS) – The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Mississippi Think Again Network is launching the *Think Again* campaign which is a statewide efforts to help people change the way they think about mental health and shatter the silence around suicide.

DMH is launching the mental health awareness campaign in conjunction with Mental Illness Awareness Week during October 4 – 10. The campaign, *Think Again*, is designed to increase understanding of mental health among young adults through educational materials, presentations and other avenues. The campaign asks young adults in high school and college to “think again” about mental health and to challenge their understanding of the role they can play in supporting friends and family who have a mental illness.

Having good mental health is an essential component of good physical health. In Mississippi, mental health problems are more common than you may think. One in five people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, and one family in four has a member who has a mental illness and who will require some type of treatment. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in Mississippi claiming more than 390 lives in 2007.

“We believe that knowledge can empower the young adults in Mississippi,” said Ed LeGrand, DMH executive director. “With increased understanding, people will be more likely to reach out for assistance as they begin to see symptoms either in themselves or their friends. This will allow our entire mental health system throughout the State to better serve those who have mental illnesses.”

-more-

While studies show that most people with mental illnesses get better and many recover completely, the misconceptions and stereotypes people have of mental illness and mental healthcare is often a barrier to recover. Changing the way you think about mental health can go a long way in encouraging young adults to seek help. This is especially important since the symptoms of most mental illnesses begin to manifest themselves during the young adult years. The opportunity for recovery at any age is more likely in a society of acceptance. “Think Again” is meant to educate and inspire young people to understand mental illness and to reach out to those who have them.

There are several steps you can take to change the way people think about mental health:

- Treat people with mental health needs with respect and dignity, as you would anybody else.
- Encourage your friends and family to talk about mental health and any problems they may be facing. By supporting your loved ones, you are showing them you care and breaking down barriers that cause people to not seek treatment.
- Don’t label people with mental health problems by using terms negative terms such as “crazy.”
- Teach your children about mental health. By beginning education at an early age, we can change perceptions and encourage good mental health.
- If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, don’t keep it a secret. Speak up and talk to someone you trust.

For more information on the campaign, to order educational materials or to schedule a presentation, contact DMH at 601-359-1288 or visit www.dmh.ms.gov.

###

DMH is supporting a better tomorrow by making a difference in the lives of Mississippians with mental illness, substance abuse problems and intellectual or developmental disabilities one person at a time.